



Over the Hills and Through the Woods

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, September 24, 2007

City Hall Diary

Open space is a very important quality-of-life issue. With so much development happening everywhere, we need to remember to include open space in our plans. I attended two outdoor events this week that reminded me about how important open space is, especially where there are trees. Both of the events were located in pristine areas.

It isn't mandatory that I attend all events, but in these two cases I am glad I went. I was invited to attend "Best in the West," which was the sixteenth annual SWAT Team competition held at the Sheriff's firearms range south of Metcalf Power station in Coyote Valley. SWAT Teams from all over California competed in sniper exercises, the jungle course, and shotgun competitions among others. The event was hosted by Santa Clara County Sheriff Laurie Smith. This area is beautiful, with rolling hillsides, trees, etc. It is the area that I am thankful that former Mayor Susan Hammer set aside for the urban growth boundary.

I went to support the San Jose police SWAT team called MERGE. They did quite well. As we know, our SWAT team is not utilized on a daily basis (which is a good thing) but is called out for more life threatening crises, like a hostage situation. Watching the SWAT team in action gave me much admiration for the training that our San Jose Police officers do on a continual basis. I fully enjoyed seeing them in action and appreciate their service to our city.

The second event that I attended was the San Jose Water Company's fifth annual Leadership BBQ. It was an evening event located in the Los Gatos Mountains off Bear Creek Road and Black Road. The San Jose Water Company owns several acres of land by the Sierra Azul Open Space in the Los Gatos Creek watershed. I felt like I was in Switzerland with the lush greenery and beautiful lake. Unfortunately, San Jose Water Company has discussed the idea of logging 1,002 acres of trees in the watershed to make way for a "future property owner."

I am not sure what the status of this issue is now, but I couldn't imagine allowing for such a large amount of the trees to be cut. It is a picture-perfect venue that could not be recreated, even if one tried.

These events reminded me of how important it is to preserve and promote our open spaces in order to maintain our quality of life.

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